

Strengthening California Teaching Workforce

Recruitment, Selection and Retention
Of High Quality Teachers at Edison Schools

Because the success of Edison's schools rests upon the quality and strength of our teaching force, we are committed to establishing a diverse, talented, professional faculty in every partnership school. This commitment requires a high-quality, intensely focused recruitment and selection effort and a school design that supports teachers.

Recruitment

The goal of this effort is to establish a candidate pool that brings together applicants with different talents and strengths from the local, regional, and national teaching community around a common goal: teaching in a partnership school. Candidates generated by the recruitment effort should reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population and community, as well as a range of teaching experience and subject knowledge. Recruitment is done primarily through staff referrals. Other recruitment efforts include Edison's web page on the Internet, visiting local universities, inviting teacher candidates to school open houses and advertisements in local papers.

Selection

The selection process is fair, comprehensive and applied equally to all applicants. The process is multifaceted to uncover the special talents and skills to be a successful Edison teacher. The principal leads the process, candidates are interviewed by a team which includes lead teachers, teachers and parents. The expectations of Edison teachers are clearly articulated to each candidate. Teacher candidates know that the school calendar and daily schedule in Edison schools is considerably longer than the norm for public schools. Teachers know that they will be accountable for student achievement, and that they will be evaluated in curriculum, assessment and instruction; building an effective learning environment; partnership with families; and technology. In most schools, candidates are asked to provide a video of their teaching or they are observed teaching a lesson.

As a team the interview panel is looking for teachers who care deeply about children as learners, who are willing to and enjoy participating in a team. Candidates must be able to clearly communicate with parents and the community. Candidates must be enthusiastic, flexible and responsive to feedback. Teachers should have a variety of interests.

Retention

The Edison design for teacher retention is built on four main points:

- ❑ A collegial organization
- ❑ A path for career development
- ❑ A system that supports educators
- ❑ Ongoing professional development

A Collegial Organization

In exit interviews of teachers leaving the profession the number one reason for leaving consistently has been a lack of support from leadership. To provide support to all teachers the Edison design organizes teachers into teams, where they work together. These teams are called Houses and consist of four to six teachers. These teachers meet daily for a forty-five minute professional development. This team approach provides new teachers with support, each team has a lead teacher whose primary duty is to mentor the teachers in his/her House. The daily professional development time allows teachers to do peer observations, to discuss curriculum and instructional approaches, to compare notes on what does and does not work. This daily meeting gives teachers time to solve problems and to celebrate successes.

A Path for Career Development

In many systems for a teacher to be promoted they have to leave the classroom. The Edison design has a career path for teachers that awards greater status and pay but allows teachers to continue doing what they do best and love most: teach. There are four levels of teaching in partner/charter Edison schools. The lead teachers are the organizational leaders for their teams. They coach and mentor less experienced peers. They coordinate the daily professional development time. The lead teacher promotes ongoing and effective communication between their House and the Lead Team, and their House with parents and community members. Lead teachers work closely with the principal in the evaluation of their team members. They assist in hiring of new teachers and are members of the Lead Team. The senior teacher is an educator who demonstrates mastery in an area. They coordinate and/or provide the professional development in their area of expertise. Senior teachers are also responsible for the dissemination of curriculum in their area. The developing teachers are responsible for mastering instructional strategies and working effectively with colleagues. Developing teachers usually have been teaching for at least a couple of years and have shown success as a resident teacher. The resident teacher is a beginning level. Residents work under the direct supervision and with support from their lead teacher.

We know that effective teachers are critical to the success of the school, we also know that the role of the teacher is greatly enhanced with the support of a great principal. Edison principals work to create an environment that encourages and rewards risk taking and creativity, where staff is eager to learn new things and willing to be held accountable. Edison principals are instructional leaders with an extensive background in the classroom teaching.

A System that Supports Educators

Teachers and principals in Edison schools have optimal working conditions. Through the effective use of time and technology an educator's life in an Edison school is changed dramatically. Every teacher has a lap top computer. Every classroom has a phone with a voice mail system. All of the curricular materials to productively teach are provided. Every teacher has access to Edison's intranet system called, "The Common." The Common offers instructional innovations, curricular materials, lesson plans all related to the lessons the teachers are using. Every teacher has ninety minutes of time built into their daily schedule for professional development, House Team meetings, grade level meetings, lesson planning or catching up on professional reading. Edison schools expect a great deal from teachers and principals, and we give a great deal back through a system designed to support educators.

Professional Development

Edison schools make a serious investment in professional development for all partnership teachers, principals and school staff. The professional development program is aligned to the curriculum and instructional strategies that the teachers will use. There are two-parts to the program. There is an intensive summer session that introduces new staff to Edison's philosophy, curriculum and instructional methods, the use of the technology and how to have effective learning environments. The second part of the professional development program is the ongoing House-based program. Each House team develops a Professional Growth Plan with goals, activities to accomplish the goals and with evidence that the goals have been met. The House team works on these goals in their daily professional development time. Every teacher receives two periods each day to devote to professional development.

Edison Schools Inc. is committed to supporting teachers by encouraging and allowing them to do their best work and to providing a system that values educators. A system that is designed to retain excellent teachers providing them with a collegial organization, a path for career development, a system that supports educators and ongoing professional development.

Strengthening the California Teaching Workforce
Through Recruitment, Selection & Retention of High Quality Individuals

Witness: Catherine Rodriguez

I. Recruitment Process Operating Schools

- A. Develop candidate pools
 - 1-Referral Incentives
 - 2-Internet –Edison Web Page
 - 3-Word of Mouth
 - 4-School Open House
- B. Why Edison
 - 1-Research based Design
 - 2-Work in Teams
 - 3-National Professional Development
 - 4-Access to Technology for Teachers and Students
 - 5-Opportunities for Advancement
 - a-At the site
 - b-Nationally
- C. Determine positions available
 - 1-Write staffing profile (determine individuals that will complement members of House Team)
 - 2-Recruitment for specific position
 - a-candidate pool
 - b-The Common- other Edison employees
 - c-District employees (partnership district)
 - d-Local colleges, ad in paper

II. Selection Process

- A. Criteria for position clearly articulated
- B. Expectations of Edison teachers clearly articulated
 - 1-Areas for evaluation
 - 2-Expectation to work in House Teams
 - 3-Longer school day and year
- C. Interview Process
 - 1-Team to interview- Principal, Lead Teacher where vacancy is, another teacher, parent
 - 2-Interview Process- clearly defined, legal, ethical
- D. Observation of Candidate teaching
- E. Look for in Candidates
 - 1-Care deeply about children as learners
 - 2-Participate on team
 - 3-Communicate well with parents
 - 4-Second Language (Spanish)
 - 5- Enthusiasm
 - 6-Solid knowledge of subject matter
 - 7-Defined management technique
 - 8-Variety of interests
 - 9-Flexible

- 10-Responsive to feedback
- 11-Think & respond quickly

III. Retention of Teachers Process

- A. Staff Recognition & Retention Plan
- B. Leadership Support of Teachers
- C. Professional Development
- D. Compensation
- E. Teacher Working Environment